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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



### THESIS

PRECIPITATING THE DECLINE OF  
TERRORIST GROUPS:  
A SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

by

Todd H. DeGhetto

March, 1994

Thesis Advisor

James J. Wirtz

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<p>This thesis shows how a government actor can use systems theory to hasten the decline of a terrorist group. The author assumes terrorist groups are social organizations, therefore terrorist groups come to value organizational survival over ideological or programmatic achievements. The same determinants that cause social organizations to decline will cause terrorist organizations to decline. Using systems theory to model terrorism as a system, it is possible to show how to influence these determinants to increase the terrorist group's rate of decline.</p> <p>The systems model allows a government actor to build intervention strategies tailored to counter a specific terrorist organization. The government actor can use the model to identify and then target the terrorist's weak points. It also enables the government actor to determine its own strengths and to use them against the terrorist system weak points.</p> <p>Finally, the analysis tests the model against case studies of the Red Brigades in Italy, and the Front De Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) in Canada. A case study of Abu Nidal tests the proposition that terrorist groups, like other social organizations, eventually come to value organizational survival over ideological or programmatic achievements.</p>				
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Precipitating the Decline of Terrorist Groups :  
A Systems Analysis

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis shows how a government actor can use systems theory to hasten the decline of a terrorist group. The author assumes terrorist groups are social organizations, therefore terrorist groups come to value organizational survival over ideological or programmatic achievements. The same determinants that cause social organizations to decline will cause terrorist organizations to decline. Using systems theory to model terrorism as a system, it is possible to show how to influence these determinants to increase the terrorist group's rate of decline.

The systems model allows a government actor to build intervention strategies tailored to counter a specific terrorist organization. The government actor can use the model to identify and then target the terrorist's weak points. It also enables the government actor to determine its own strengths and to use them against the terrorist system weak points.

Finally, the analysis tests the model against case studies of the Red Brigades in Italy, and the Front De Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) in Canada. A case study of Abu Nidal tests the proposition that terrorist groups, like other social organizations, eventually come to value organizational survival over ideological or programmatic achievements.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This thesis demonstrates how a government can use systems theory to hasten the decline of a terrorist organization. It shows how government's can develop a counter-terrorist strategy by selecting intervention points to prompt the terrorist organization's decline. The analysis tests this hypothesis in case studies of the Red Brigades in Italy, and the Front De Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) in Canada. A case study of Abu Nidal tests the proposition that terrorist groups like other social organizations, eventually come to value organization survival over ideological or programmatic achievements.

Most literature on terrorism explains the causes, group histories, or character profiles of the people who join terrorist organizations. There have been few studies on terrorist organizational decline. Nor has the current terrorism literature given a government the tools necessary to develop an effective counter-terrorist policy. Organization theory can help solve this dilemma. Organization theory is a vast literature encompassing every aspect of organizations and their dynamics. Two subsets of organization theory, useful for this thesis, are decline theory and systems theory. Decline theory provides the determinants of organizational decline. These determinants are important when developing counter-terrorist policy. Policy that influences these determinants can promote organizational decline.

There is, however, a short fall in decline theory: it does not explain how to influence these determinants, or how to intervene in an organization to hasten its decline.

To solve this dilemma, we must turn to systems theory. Systems theory provides the tools necessary to analyze the relationship between system variables, allowing an actor to intervene and change an organization. This thesis applies systems theory to terrorist organizations. It gives a government actor the tools necessary to look at a terrorist group at any point in time and to develop an intervention strategy designed to hasten the terrorist organization's decline.



## I INTRODUCTION

This thesis demonstrates how a government actor<sup>1</sup> can use systems theory to hasten the decline of a terrorist organization. The analysis models terrorism as a dynamic system. This allows a government actor to develop counter-terrorist strategy by selecting intervention points to prompt the terrorist organization's decline. Finally, the analysis tests the model against case studies of the Red Brigades in Italy, and the Front De Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) in Canada. A case study of Abu Nidal will be used to test the proposition that terrorist groups are social organizations, therefore they eventually come to value organization survival over ideological or programmatic achievements.

Most literature on terrorism explains the causes, group histories, or character profiles of the people who join terrorist organizations. Little effort has been dedicated to the study of the dynamics of a terrorist organization and its life cycle. What causes it to rise, escalate in violence, peak as an organization, and subsequently decline? There have been few studies on terrorist organizational decline. Martha Crenshaw<sup>2</sup> compares and contrasts existing theories on terrorism's decline and governments' ability to influence the terrorists organization's decline and the organization's subsequent reactions to its troubles. She discusses three factors that contribute to the decline of terrorist organizations: the

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<sup>1</sup>A government actor is an actor outside the terrorist organization. The actor can be the state government, police or an intelligence agency.

<sup>2</sup>Martha Crenshaw, "How Terrorism Declines", Terrorism and Political Violence 3 no. 1 (Spring 1991): 69.

governments response to the terrorist actions, the strategic choice of the terrorist group, and its organizational resources.

Ted Gurr and Jeffrey Ross<sup>3</sup> use Andrew Mack's<sup>4</sup> strategy of conflict analysis and apply it to the decline of terrorism. They test their theory against domestic Canadian and United States terrorist organizations. Gurr and Ross look at the high political "strengths" of terrorist organizations relative to the state. Specifically, what factors of political "strength" lead to decline. They list preemption, deterrence, backlash, and burnout as the main factors influencing the decline of the terrorist organization.

Kent Layne Oots<sup>5</sup> also takes an organizational approach to the decline of terrorist organizations. He suggests that terrorist groups act like political interest groups. He states that the same organizational factors that contribute to the formation and decline of political interest groups also contribute to the formation and decline of terrorist organizations. He compares Crenshaw's, and Gurr and Ross's articles but asserts that the factors they identify are not the root causes of decline. Oots uses interest group theory to create his list of terrorist group decline factors: entrepreneurial leadership, recruitment of membership, ability to form coalitions with other groups, outside support (both political and financial), internal and external competition, and internal cohesiveness.

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<sup>3</sup>Jeffrey Ian Ross and Ted Robert Gurr, "Why Terrorism Subsides: A Comparative Study of Canada and the United States", Comparative Politics 21 no. 4 (July 1989): 405.

<sup>4</sup>Andrew Mack, "The Utility of Terrorism," Australia and New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 14 (1981), 200-03.

<sup>5</sup>Kent Layne Oots, "Organizational Perspectives on the Formation and Disintegration of Terrorist Groups" Terrorism 12 no. 3 (1989): 139-152.

Jerrold M. Post<sup>6</sup> looks at the psychological aspect of terrorist organizations. Post develops a psychological framework to analyze terrorist behavior. He uses the framework to develop government acts which impact on the terrorist psychology to deter them from committing further acts of violence.

Current terrorism literature does not give a government or agency the tools necessary to develop effective counterterrorist policy. There is, however, another field of research that can be superimposed onto terrorist groups to solve this dilemma -- organization theory. Organization theory is a vast literature encompassing every aspect of organizations and their dynamics. Two subsets of organization theory, useful for this thesis, are decline theory and systems theory. Decline theory identifies the determinants of organizational decline. These determinants are important when developing counterterrorist policy. Policy that influences these determinants can promote organizational decline.

There is, however, a short fall in decline theory: it does not explain how to influence these determinants, or how to intervene in an organization to hasten its decline.

To solve this dilemma we must turn to systems theory. Systems theory looks at the complex dynamic relationships of a social system.<sup>7</sup> The center of the social system is the

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<sup>6</sup>J. M. Post, "Group and Organizational Dynamics of Political Terrorism: Implications for Counterterrorist Policy" in Contemporary Research on Terrorism ed. Paule Wilkinson and Alasdair M. Stewart (Aberdeen Md: Aberdeen University Press, 1987): 307-317.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas W. Milburn, Anant R. Neganidhi and Daniel Robey, "Evaluating Systems Theory Concepts: Comments" in General Systems and Organization Theory: Methodological Aspects, ed Arlyn J. Melcher (Kent State University: Kent State University Press, 1975), 12.

organization. Systems theory provides the tools necessary to analyze the relationship between system variables allowing an actor to intervene and change the organization. This thesis applies systems theory to terrorist organizations. It gives an government actor the tools necessary to look at a terrorist group, at any point in time, and to develop an intervention strategy designed to hasten the terrorist organization's decline.

To use these subgroups of organization theory, we must define terrorist groups as organizations. They are similar to other voluntary organizations in that: (1) the group has a defined structure and processes by which collective decisions are made; (2) members of the organization occupy roles that are functionally differentiated; (3) there are recognized leaders in positions of formal authority; and (4) the organization has collective goals which it pursues as a unit, with collective responsibility claimed for its actions.<sup>8</sup>

Given that a terrorist group is an organization, three propositions merit consideration:

1. *As an organization a terrorist group will seek survival over goal achievement.*

The leader of the organization is going to do whatever is necessary to keep the organization together. A terrorist organization offers its members the fulfillment of basic human needs: the opportunity for action, the need to belong, the desire for social status, and the acquisition of material rewards.<sup>9</sup> To keep the group healthy and to fulfill these needs, the organization's leadership must maintain organizational integrity above and

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<sup>8</sup>Martha Crenshaw, "An Organizational Approach to the Analysis of Political Terrorism" *Orbis* 29 no.3 (Fall 1985): 466.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 474.

beyond the group's ideology or goals. Failure to maintain organizational integrity will create dissension in the organization and lead it into decline.

*2. There are internal and external factors that cause organizational decline.*

Determinants of organizational decline can be separated into internal and external factors. Internal factors are those that can, to some degree, be controlled by the organizations leadership. External factors cannot be controlled by the organizations leadership. The internal factors are critical error, delegitimization, mercurial success, and burnout. The external factors are environmental entropy, government response, and the media. These internal and external factors will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.

*3. Internal and external factors can be manipulated by a government actor to hasten a terrorist groups decline.*

Using systems theory to model terrorism as a system, it is possible to show how to influence the internal and external factors to increase the group's rate of decline. The systems model allows a government actor to build intervention strategies unique to a terrorist organization. The government actor can look at the system, determine the terrorists weaknesses and target them. It also enables the government actor to determine its own strengths and use them against the terrorist system weak points.

This thesis deals with terrorist groups not insurgent or revolutionary groups utilizing terror as a tactic. A terrorist organization is defined as an organization whose primary tool to achieve its political ends is political terror, unlike a revolutionary organization for which terror is only one of many tools in their arsenal. For the purposes of this paper, G. Wardlaw's definition of terrorism will be used:



[T]he use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme fear and/or anxiety-inducing effects in a target audience larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators.<sup>10</sup>

There are two main classifications of terrorist organizations, Nationalist-Separatists and Anarchic-Ideologues. Harold J. Vetter defines a Nationalist-Separatist group as "a terrorist group that is united in the goal of political self-determination, which may cross national frontiers to carry out their attacks or may operate within their own countries. Members of these groups usually see themselves as soldiers or guerrilla fighters and reject the terrorist label."<sup>11</sup> Vetter defines an Anarchic-Ideologue group as "a terrorist group that has the avowed purpose to change social, economic, and political systems. Some groups however may not embrace a specific ideological doctrine or objective, whose aim is the total abolition of all government."<sup>12</sup>

This analysis begins by looking at decline theory, specifically at the determinants of decline. How do the determinants of decline effect a terrorist organization? Next I look at how to influence these determinants using systems analysis. I develop a model of terrorism as a system, the model is dynamic in that it changes as the terrorist organization changes. The analysis then looks at intervention strategies at different points in the terrorist organizations life: during infancy, when the organization is healthy, and

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<sup>10</sup>G. Wardlaw, Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-measures (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 16.

<sup>11</sup>Harold J. Vetter and Gary R. Perlstein, Perspectives on Terrorism (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1991), 10.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 14.

when the group is on the verge of decline. Finally I use case studies of the Red Brigades in Italy and the FLQ in Canada to show how government policy [intervention strategies] effected the terrorist organizations. The thesis will attempt to determine which government policies led to the terrorist's decline and which enhanced the terrorist's legitimacy.

There are some limitations in this thesis. The model applies to terrorist groups that reside within the boundaries of the government actor, in this case one's own nation-state. There are some applications to groups residing in another country, but the model cannot be put to direct use without the host country's full cooperation. Secondly, the intervention strategies discussed are designed for terrorist groups not revolutionary organizations.<sup>13</sup>

Organization theory is too vast for a succinct overview, therefore this analysis begins with decline theory, specifically the determinants of decline. Chapter II looks at the internal and external determinants of organizational decline. Each factor is defined and applied to terrorist organizations. An understanding of what causes organizational decline will help when looking at terrorism as a system. Intervention strategies can then be better designed to produce the desired outcome, terrorist organization decline. Chapter

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<sup>13</sup> Intervention strategies for revolutionary organizations can vary widely from the ones discussed here. For systems analysis of revolutionary organizations look at Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts, Rand Corporation R-462-ARPA (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, February 1970). Leites and Wolf built a model of insurgency as a system and developed intervention strategies for revolutionary organizations.

III builds a model of terrorism as a system. Intervention strategies are developed by applying the model to a terrorist organization at different points in its life cycle. Chapter IV discusses case studies of Abu Nidal, the Red Brigades and the FLQ. A study of Abu Nidal is useful to demonstrate that organizational survival supersedes ideology and goal attainment. The Red Brigades and FLQ illustrate how intervention strategies influenced the determinants of organizational decline. The Red Brigades and FLQ were chosen for two reasons: First the Red Brigades was an Anarchic-Ideologue organization and the FLQ was a Nationalist-Separatist organization. Second, the number of violent political incidents in Italy exceeded any other country or region, yet the Italian government did not suspend civil liberties to defeat the Red Brigades. The number of incidents in Quebec were a fraction compared to Italy yet the Canadian government invoked the War Measures Act and suspended civil liberties to defeat the FLQ. The final chapter will close the analysis, and discuss the limitations of this argument.

## **II THE DETERMINANTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DECLINE**

There are few studies on the dynamics of terrorist organizations. What causes them to rise, escalate in violence, peak as an organization, and subsequently decline? There are fewer studies on terrorist organizational decline. Nor does this literature give a government or agency the tools necessary to develop effective counterterrorist policy.

We can respond to this lacuna by superimposing another field of research onto terrorism. Organization theory encompasses every aspect of organizations and their dynamics. Decline theory is a subset of organization theory, and quite useful when looking at terrorist organizational decline. Decline theory provides the determinants (root causes) of organizational decline. These determinants are important when formulating counterterrorist policy. Policy that influences these determinants can promote organizational decline.

In this chapter, the determinants of organizational decline are identified and applied to terrorist organizations. An understanding of organizational decline will help in Chapter III when we look at terrorism as a system and develop counterterrorist strategies.

Organizational decline can be broken down into internal and external factors. The organization's leadership can, to some degree, control the internal factors. The organization's leadership cannot control the external factors.

## **A. INTERNAL FACTORS EFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL DECLINE**

The internal factors that affect the decline of a terrorist organization are: delegitimization, mercurial success<sup>14</sup>, critical error, and burnout. Crenshaw includes voice and exit in the list of internal factors affecting a terrorist organization.<sup>15</sup> These are symptoms of, or responses to decline, not the causes of decline.

### **1. Critical Error**

The decisive factor effecting a terrorist organization is a critical error. A critical error is a decision made by the organization's leadership to conduct an operation that goes far beyond the accepted level of violence within their base of support. This would produce extreme responses [backlash] from its supporters, alienating the group from all sectors outside the terrorist organization and also heighten "disapproval" of those against it. Backlash can take the form of a public denouncement of the organization, loss of recruits, money, resources, or safe havens. It can cause dissension, delegitimization, or even exit from the organization.

Technology and resources can also contribute to the occurrence of a critical error. When the group reaches its plateau in technology and resources, it may still try to

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<sup>14</sup>David A. Whetten, "Sources, Responses, and Effects of Organizational Decline" in The Organizational Life Cycle, ed. John R. Kimberly and others (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981), 356.

<sup>15</sup>Crenshaw defines "exit" as either (1) joining a rival organization that appears more satisfactory, or (2) splintering off and creating a new group. She defines "voice" as the articulation of complaints in order to persuade the group to follow another direction. See Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches" in Inside Terrorist Organizations ed David C. Rapoport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 22.

escalate the violence level against the state. During target selection the terrorists may lose sight of a target's strategic implications. Targets held in high regard by the group's supporters will produce critical errors. A good example of this is the assassination of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades in Italy. This caused such an uproar, that the Italian government was able to enact severe antiterrorism laws bringing down the Red Brigade.<sup>16</sup>

## **2. Delegitimization**

Delegitimization is an organization's loss of legitimacy in the eyes of its members. A terrorist organization can lose legitimacy in several ways, through legalization, goal attainment or goal transformation. The most likely way a group will lose legitimacy occurs when the leaders of the group decide to take legal actions to achieve their goals. Radical members within the group will not settle for this "half hearted" approach, they will split and form a more violent group, striving to achieve the "pure solution."<sup>17</sup> Nationalist-separatist groups tend to fall into this category. For example, the Irish Republican Army started as a small terrorist organization and as they escalated in violence, they began to lose support from the southern Irish. The leadership attempted to obtain their goals legally when they formed Sinn Fein. The more radical members split off and continued the terror campaign. This cyclic pattern continued throughout the IRA's history, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) formed in

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<sup>16</sup>Richard Drake, The Revolutionary Mystique and Terrorism in Contemporary Italy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 146-147.

<sup>17</sup>Crenshaw, "An organizational Approach", 487.

1969 because the IRA was not taking action against the British.<sup>18</sup> The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) formed from an even more radical faction because they believe that the PIRA actions were to mild.

A second aspect of delegitimization occurs when changes in the environment meet the stated objectives of the organization. Without goals to strive for the group no longer needs to exist. Now, the leadership must shift goals and refocus the group to keep the organization from disintegrating. Changing the group's goals or focus can result in mild backlash from supporters, and disenchant group members who then question the legitimacy of the organization. Anarchic-Ideologue groups frequently shift their strategic goals to keep the organization healthy. An example is Action Directe in France. They frequently changed their goals to the most prominent anti-government issues at the time.<sup>19</sup>

It takes significant resources to conduct effective terrorist operations.<sup>20</sup> Terrorists will often resort to "criminal" activities to fund their operations. As the frequency of criminal activities increases, the amount of constituent support they receive will decrease. Especially if their support base sees the terrorists as "criminals who rob banks, live in expensive apartments, and drive around in expensive cars."<sup>21</sup> This can also

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<sup>18</sup>J. Boyer Bell, The Secret Army: The IRA 1916-1979 (Swords, Co Dublin, Ireland: Poolbeg Press Ltd, 1989), 366.

<sup>19</sup>Crenshaw, "An Organizational Approach," 471.

<sup>20</sup>G. Davidson Smith, Combating Terrorism (London: Routledge, 1990), 13.

<sup>21</sup>Michael Baumann, How It All Began (New York: Grove Press, 1979), 129.

cause disenchantment among the weaker members of the terrorist organization resulting in further delegitimization.

### **3. Mercurial Success**

Mercurial success is normally found in organizations with charismatic leadership. It is "a rapid growth followed by a precipitous decline because managers, intoxicated with success, become careless."<sup>22</sup> Mercurial success indicates that as the organization reaches its full potential as an organization the leader must either level off the organization into a steady state, or introduce proper management into the organization to continue development. If the organization continues without change it will rapidly decline.<sup>23</sup> Terrorist organizations are prone to this type of life cycle. It is highly unlikely that a terrorist group would bring in a consultant to "manage" their organization. The terrorist leadership would have to "legitimize" the organization and legally participate in government activities.

As the group becomes more successful it may become careless in several ways. It may suffer a critical error that may devastate the organization. The terrorist group may become lax with operational security. Lastly an intelligence break through can give a state the edge it needs to destroy the infrastructure of the organization.

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<sup>22</sup>Whetten, 356.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 357.



#### 4. Burnout

Joseph G. Rosse defines burnout as "a process which a previously committed [employee] disengages from his or her work in response to stress and strain experienced in the job" and as "a state of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive psychological and emotional demands. . . ."<sup>24</sup> Living underground, the risk of operations, and the stress of not taking action take their toll on the mind and body of a terrorist. In an underground organization, there are few ways to vent stress. Burnout occurs when individuals become disenchanted with violence. Either these individuals do not see the violence fulfilling their political objectives or they came to believe that the group has turned away from its political objectives toward criminal tendencies. This leads to schisms within the group, resistance toward leaders and their goals, declining enthusiasm to take risks and eventually exit.<sup>25</sup> Burnout is common among terrorists, more so in the anarchic-ideology group type. Comparing the average age of Anarchic-Ideologues [17-25] to Nationalist-Separatists [20-50] groups shows this.<sup>26</sup> The difference between the two group types is the post burnout process. Anarchic-Ideologue groups are extremely small and suspicious. When a member questions the group's intentions he or she is seen as disloyal. Often the only way to exit the group is "feet first." National-Separatist groups on the other hand, have a much larger constituent support base. They are fighting for the freedom of their people. In these

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<sup>24</sup>Joseph G. Rosse, et al. "Conceptualizing the Role of Self-Esteem in the Burnout Process", Group & Organization Studies 16 no. 4 (December 1991): 429.

<sup>25</sup>Ross and Gurr, "Why Terrorism Subsides", 409.

<sup>26</sup>United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Law Enforcement Bulletin" 57 no 4 (April 1988): 18-19.

groups, members who burnout can leave the violent core and become part of the infrastructure required to support the group.

## **B. EXTERNAL FACTORS EFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL DECLINE**

The external factors that effect decline of a terrorist organization are: environmental entropy,<sup>27</sup> government response, and the media. A nation's government can manipulate the external factors to influence the decline of an organization. The government must use backlash, environmental entropy and the media to formulate effective counter- terrorist policy.

### **1. Environmental Entropy**

Environmental entropy is a reduction in the capacity of the environment to support an organization.<sup>28</sup> For a terrorist organization this means that its base of support is collapsing and the ability to conduct operations is becoming increasingly risky. Money, recruits and supplies become scarce. The support base will not or cannot supply safe houses. Government policy is curtailing the group's ability to move and set up operations.

The sources of environmental entropy can come from the terrorist support base, or the state. The support base can withdraw for several reasons. They may become disenchanted with the terrorist group. When the support base views the group as nothing more than criminals, support will quickly dry up. Recruiting will decline and people will

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<sup>27</sup>Whetten, 360.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

not be willing to put themselves in jeopardy to aid criminal activities. A critical error by the terrorist will have the same effect. State legislation and police, and military action can reduce the number of "effective political" targets the group can attack. These also make it difficult for the terrorists to move, obtain safe houses and conduct operations.

As the terrorists' operating environment decreases, their options decrease. The terrorist group can scale down operations to reduce the risk of being caught and destroyed. The terrorist's leadership can attempt to legalize the organization rather than risk complete destruction. A third option the terrorist organization can take is escalate operations to "prove" their strength and invincibility. Escalating the level of violence is the most dangerous option for organizational survival. The increased violence can cause backlash and facilitate government efforts to destroy the group.

## **2. Government Response**

A government can create three main problems for a terrorist organization: environmental entropy, exit and physical elimination. The state can affect the organization's decline by raising the cost of supporting the organization. Increased criminal sentences for supplying the terrorist group with money, arms, explosives, or safe houses, will shrink the terrorists' support base. The state can enact laws forcing landowners and landlords to provide names of all new tenants to the police severely degrading the group's ability to obtain safe houses. Italian authorities incorporated this into the "decree-law" of 15 December 1979.<sup>29</sup> The government can use political pressure

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<sup>29</sup>Robert C. Meade Jr., Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 208.

or sanctions on foreign sponsors to stop exogenous supplies. If pressure and sanctions fail the state can interdict the exogenous supply transactions.

The state can enact laws that encourage exit from the terrorist organization.<sup>30</sup> For example, reduced prison sentences for individuals who provide intelligence on the location and activities of other members, specifically the terrorist infrastructure. Police can use this new intelligence to arrest more members of the organization. If the police can encourage these individuals to provide further intelligence, they can eliminate the terrorist infrastructure and destroy the organization. These operations will cause even further confusion, stress and delegitimization within the organization, possibly leading to more voluntary deserters.

### **3. Media**

The media can play a significant role in the decline of terrorist organizations during their infancy. If the government down plays the impact or importance of the terrorist operations, the terrorist groups may never get over the initial hurdles of legitimization. The government must continue to down play the terrorist operations though the terrorists may attempt to escalate violence to force the media to give them coverage. The terrorist group will eventually commit a critical error in their quest for

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<sup>30</sup>The Italian government enacted the first *pentiti* law after the Aldo Moro and Guido Rossa affairs. The Pentiti laws encouraged exit by providing disenchanted Red Brigade members with reduced prison terms for intelligence leading to the capture of other Red Brigade members, especially those comprising the groups infrastructure. Minor reduction in sentences were given to pentiti who did not provide intelligence but left the organization voluntarily. (Drake, 146-147)

legitimacy. This will isolate them from their base of support enabling the state to eliminate them.

Manipulation of the media can affect established organizations through a reeducation approach [propaganda]. Reeducation can target the terrorist group itself or its support base. As part of its counter-terrorist strategy the state may opt to pass emergency decrees to increase environmental entropy [power-coercive strategies]. When a state attempts to pass these strategies alone, it ends up dividing society when a division of opinion or power within the society exists.<sup>31</sup> To pass these laws without creating backlash against the state and losing legitimacy, the state must also use reeducation strategies so an informed public will accept the changes.<sup>32</sup>

Authorities can also use reeducation against members of the group. A reeducation strategy might begin to alter an individual's self-image which will cause him to view himself as different from the rest of the group. This will create disequilibrium within the individual and possible exit or dissension. I will discuss reeducation further in Chapter IV, intervention strategies.

### **C. EFFECTS OF DECLINE**

Whether the organization's leaders realize its impending decline or not, they will feel the pressure of these internal and external sources of decline. Performance in any

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<sup>31</sup>Robert Chin and Kenneth D. Benne, "General Strategies for Effecting Changes in Human systems", in The Planning of Change, ed. Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Robert Chin, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, INC., 1969), 52.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 55.

group is highest at an optimal level of stress,<sup>33</sup> the same holds true for terrorist organizations. David Whetten also points out that continually increasing stress will destroy the organization: "All living systems respond to continuously increasing stress first by a lag in response, then by an over compensatory response and finally by catastrophic collapse of the system."<sup>34</sup> As the stress builds beyond this optimal level, interpersonal conflict will increase, and voice will become a factor. An increase in voice will increase dissension within the group and possible exit. An increase in stress also reduces the group's margin of error,<sup>35</sup> at this point backlash can kill the organization.

#### **D. RESPONSES TO DECLINE**

Once the terrorist organization senses the effects of decline it is going to react in one of five general ways. The first is a defensive response. Defensive reactions are attempts to bring the group closer together. Strict adherence to the groups rules and procedures become more important than fulfilling original objectives. The group will attempt to defend its integrity.<sup>36</sup> Through their ideology and rhetoric they will try to keep their legitimacy in the eyes of their support base.

The second type of reaction is offensive. This is an attempt by the leadership to solve the symptoms of decline, not the root causes. An offensive response usually

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<sup>33</sup>Whetten, 371.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., A quote from J.G. Miller's 1955 "General Theory for the Behavioral Sciences."

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 368.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 364.

manifests itself as a radical escalation in violence. These are quick reactions in the face of extinction.<sup>37</sup> They are attempts to regain the legitimacy of the organization in the eyes of the group's members.

Preventive reactions are the third type of response. These are attempts by the group to manipulate their environment, to either remove the threat to their existence or increase their relative strength against the state.<sup>38</sup> The group can terminate their weaker members, members whom they believe will exit or will somehow jeopardize the organization. The group will target selected officials who are closely tied to the threat against the organization, for instance judges, lawyers, and police officials.

Another reaction to decline is fractionalization. This can occur with any of the other reactions to decline. Fractionalization occurs when a group of individuals become disenchanted with the organization's focus and split off forming their own group. The new group is usually, if not always, more radical and violent. The PROVOS, for instance, were a radical offspring of the IRA, and the INLA formed because the PROVOS were not violent enough. In the United States the Order [Bruders Schweigen Strike force] formed because the Aryan Nations were not conducting sufficient violence.

The last reaction to decline is no reaction by the group. The organization continues along its present course and in time dies. After the group disintegrates, members remain

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<sup>37</sup>Kim S. Cameron and Raymond F. Zammuto, "Matching Managerial Strategies to Conditions of Decline" in Readings in Organizational Decline ed. Kim S. Cameron, Robert I. Sutton and David A. Whetten (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1988), 120.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

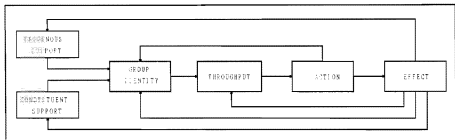
underground, give themselves up or join other organizations. Few terrorist organizations go out this quietly.

These internal and external factors are the building blocks for effective counter-terrorism policy. The next chapter looks at terrorism as a system. Systems analysis determines the intervention points in a terrorist system to prompt its decline. Intervention points are chosen with the ultimate intention of influencing the determinants of decline.



### III TERRORISM AS A SYSTEM

Terrorism as a system is shown in Figure 1. The terrorist organization receives exogenous support from sources other than its constituent base. These sources often include other governments, terrorist groups or revolutionary organizations.



**Figure 1** Terrorism as a System

Constituent support is the population sympathetic to the group. They supply financial and material support, recruits, intelligence, safe houses, and transportation networks. The inputs into the system help form the group's identity, how they perceive themselves in the role as the vanguard of the cause. The throughput is the group's process of converting the inputs into output, for example acts of political violence. The action itself will enhance the group's identity. A successfully executed operation will increase the group's cohesion and belief in its goals. The effects of the action build the legitimacy of the organization and decrease the legitimacy of the state. An increase in

the group's legitimacy will increase support received by both their constituents and exogenous backers. It will also increase the legitimacy of the group in the eyes of its members. The effects of the action will also influence the groups throughput process, shaping their next action.

This cycle will continue until a government actor eliminates the group's infrastructure. The model allows a government actor to choose intervention strategies appropriate to the strengths of the actor and weaknesses of the terrorist group.

#### **A. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

Ultimately the state's objective is to eliminate the group, while keeping its own legitimacy. To accomplish this goal, the state must destroy the terrorist infrastructure. Accurate intelligence is essential to locate the group's leadership. The most reliable method, but also the most dangerous and sometimes impractical, is to infiltrate the organization. Depending on the group, a government may not authorize infiltration by its own agents. Infiltration takes a substantial amount of time and more often than not, part of the qualification process is violent illegal activity. In the Abu Nidal organization, members must be in the organization at least ten years before assignment to prominent positions.<sup>39</sup> When the government will not allow its agents to conduct violent actions, infiltration is impractical. Terrorists will look at a member who will not conduct an act of violence with suspicion.

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<sup>39</sup>Patrick Seale, Abu Nidal: A Gun For Hire (New York: Random House, 1992), 224.

In the United States, the FBI has often attacked terrorist organization's infrastructure directly. They could penetrate the organizations with informants and infiltrators. The FBI preempted terrorist actions decreasing the terrorist organization's legitimacy. Once they had sufficient intelligence, the FBI arrested and successfully prosecuted the violent infrastructure of every major terrorist organization in the continental United States. In 1986-87 alone, the FBI prosecuted over 100 persons from the radical right wing.<sup>40</sup>

Infiltration may be unrealistic in the more violent and radical groups of Europe and the Middle East where the "entrance fee" is committing illegal acts of violence. The next logical step for the government would be to establish an informant within the organization. Again this takes time to establish a relationship with someone in an organization who will lose his or her life if he or she is compromised.

When infiltration becomes impractical, analyzing terrorism as a system (Figure 1) allows a government actor to target alternate, but more accessible points within the system. The ultimate target is the terrorist's infrastructure, but it is also the most protected. Alternate but more accessible targets are the inputs, the constituent support and exogenous support. The next level in difficulty is targeting the action's effect. The state should attempt to alter the effect of the action with the intent of decreasing the organization's legitimacy and increasing the state's legitimacy. The terrorist action itself is going to be the hardest, if not impossible, to target. Throughout strategy development, the government must strive to keep or improve its own legitimacy in the eyes of its

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<sup>40</sup>John W. Harris, Jr. "Domestic Terrorism in the 1980's" FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. 56 no 11 (October 1987): 13.

constituents and specifically the eyes of the group's sympathizers while it is trying to delegitimize the terrorist organization. Government restraint can accomplish this. In other words, the government should not over react to terrorist incidents thereby reinforcing terrorist claims.

Before a terrorist group commits a critical error, the state must continually target the terrorist group's identity. Attempt to create dissension and undermine the terrorist group's legitimacy. Then the state can target the terrorist's infrastructure. When a terrorist group makes a critical error, the government must capitalize on it immediately. The government must use the backlash period to alienate and attack the group. They can develop laws and policy to encourage and enhance exit, thereby increasing dissension. Authorities can use intelligence received from the deserters to destroy the organization and its infrastructure. The Italian government used the intelligence received from the *pentiti* after the Aldo Moro, Taliercio and Dozier incidents to arrest layer after layer of Red Brigade activists defeating the Red Brigades.

When a group is healthy, the first step is targeting the exogenous and constituent support bases to increase environmental entropy. The government can raise the cost of supporting the terrorist group considerably. Anti-terrorism laws can let sympathizers know that any illegal activity on their part will result in higher sentences than the ones meted out for the same crime committed under normal circumstances.

Another aspect of attacking the support base is using the media to exploit the terrorist criminal activities. Over time this will delegitimize the terrorist organization and shrink the support base. Authorities must take care not to "misinform" the public.

Catching the state in a lie could result in backlash against the government. This will decrease the government's legitimacy and increasing the legitimacy of the terrorist organization.

The government may also target the exogenous support link to the organization. The state can use political pressure or sanctions on another government that is supporting an internal terrorist organization. Authorities can take direct action against foreign governments that sponsor terrorist organizations, such as the United States raid on Libya.

Authorities can apply political pressure to another government if the exogenous support is coming from an organization within its boundaries. It cannot take direct action against the state because they are not directly sponsoring the terrorism. Nor would the harboring state allow intervention by a foreign government inside their territory, that would delegitimize that government. Together with the political pressure you can take direct action to interdict the supply lines used in the transactions. The government can monitor and freeze bank accounts, hold cargo at customs points, and seize any material or supplies destined or suspected for the terrorist organization.

Simultaneously the state can target the members of the terrorist group through propaganda. The state can attempt to "reeducate" terrorists, change not only their self-image but their attitude and outlook toward the group and its methods of achieving its goals. This will increase the stress and tension within the group. The increased stress and tension will create dissatisfaction with the status quo, thereby increasing dissension and motivation for individual's to change their surroundings. The first step in the process is

to "unfreeze" the individual's current attitudes and behavior.<sup>41</sup> According to Edgar H. Schein this is accomplished by confronting the individual with one of the following or combination of the following:

(1) that his self-image is out of line with what others and the situation will grant him or can sustain; (2) that his definition of the situation is out of line with "reality" as defined by others in the situation; (3) that his image of the others is out of line with their image of themselves or of each other.<sup>42</sup>

The state can continue the reeducation propaganda and create a "guilt anxiety" in the individual. The group's own ideology, can be used to induce a sense of inadequacy in the individual: the member is not living up to the ideology, the member has dishonored the group's ideals, or has disappointed the group's constituent support.<sup>43</sup> The next step for the state is to provide the member the opportunity to "change" by exiting the group.

The combination of these actions will eventually pressure the terrorist organization, with the objective of undermining its legitimacy in the eyes of its members. Once this occurs the terrorist organization is on the brink of decline. Herbert A. Shepard has stated, "Radical innovations are most readily adopted and implemented in times of organizational crisis."<sup>44</sup> These radical innovations are a response by the terrorists to relieve the anxiety

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<sup>41</sup>Edgar H. Schein, *The Mechanisms of Change* in *The Planning of Change*, ed. Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Rober Chin, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, INC., 1969), 99.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 100.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Herbert A. Shepard, "Innovation-Resisting and Innovation-Producing Organizations" in *The Planning of Change*, ed. Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Rober Chin, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, INC., 1969), 521.

and stress induced by the crisis the group is facing. As unethical as this sounds, an option for the government is to provoke the terrorist into committing a critical error, to produce outrage among its supporters. Another option is to promote the "rich criminal" label in a propaganda campaign. The group may respond by escalating the violence to regain their reputation as a serious political force.<sup>45</sup> Backlash will often cause the terrorist group to peak in its life cycle. This was the case for both the "2nd of June Movement" and The Red Army Faction in West Germany. Both groups began bombing campaigns to reestablish their legitimacy resulting in severe repercussions from their support base. In Michael Baumann<sup>46</sup>'s opinion, this was the end for both groups. Authorities can take full advantage of this situation and bring all guns to bear on the terrorist's infrastructure.

Once again, intelligence is the key to attacking the terrorist infrastructure. Any move possible to determine the whereabouts and subsequent capture of key personnel will undermine the legitimacy of the organization. Once the core individuals are eliminated, the group will eventually die. At worst case the group will fractionate, but with the government in control and no support base, these smaller groups will never get off the ground.

Without proper intelligence, targeting the output of the terrorist organization will be impossible. Terrorist organizations are usually secretive and compartmentalize

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<sup>45</sup>Konrad Kellen, Terrorists--What are they like? How some terrorists describe their world and actions A Rand Note N-1300-SL (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation), 43.

<sup>46</sup>Michael Baumann was the founder and leader of the 2nd Of June Movement (1971-1980) in West Germany.

operational planning information. The government can use surveillance and electronic monitoring to pick up possible terrorist transactions, transmissions or safe houses. It is highly unlikely, however, they will obtain sufficient intelligence to thwart the attack. Without a source inside the operational planning loop, a state would need a little luck or the terrorists would have to make a mistake in order for the government to prevent the operation.

Another problem for counter target operations is the evolution of terrorist targeting. Terrorist operations have evolved from hostage barricade situations to direct action type operations, assassinations, and bombings. The probability of arresting or capturing a terrorist at the target site is almost nonexistent. In bombing operations, the government might be in the right place at the right time to minimize damage or find a piece of the terrorist large enough for identification or at least historical data of how the terrorist infiltrated, set up and executed the operation. Assassinations tend to be quick hits with a short evidence trail.

The stronger the terrorist organization the more authorities must concentrate on keeping their legitimacy while attempting to attack the input and preempt the actions of the terrorist group. Once it finds a crack in the organization, the objective is to widen it to a chasm. Analysts and officers should try to promote exit to gather intelligence and destroy the organization. As with counterinsurgency, it is going to take time to establish enough intelligence on the organization to destroy it. The government actor must keep its legitimacy in the eyes of its constituents. The smaller the base of support for the



terrorist organization the easier it will be to delegitimize the terrorist organization and eliminate them.

#### IV CASE STUDIES

This chapter looks at case studies of three terrorist groups: Abu Nidal, Red Brigades and the FLQ. Abu Nidal verifies proposition one: organizations will seek survival before obtaining ideological or programatic goals. The Red Brigades and FLQ show the effect different government policies had on the terrorist organization, specifically which intervention strategies promoted decline within the terrorist organization's and which delegitimized the state thereby strengthening the terrorist organization. The two cases are broken down into three phases, pre-critical error, critical error, and post-critical error. Each phase evaluates the actions each state took to defeat the terrorist organization, how the terrorist organization responded, and what possible options, offered by the terrorism as a system model, the state could have chosen to influence decline.

The Red Brigades and FLQ were chosen for two reasons. First the Red Brigades were an Anarchic-Ideologue organization and the FLQ was a Nationalist-Separatist organization. Second, the number of violent political incidents in Italy exceeded any other country or region, yet the Italian government did not suspend civil liberties to defeat the Red Brigades. Compared to Italy, Quebec had just a fraction the number of violent incidents, yet the Canadian government invoked the War Measures Act and suspended civil liberties to defeat the FLQ.

## **A. THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION**

Sabri al-Banna, aka Abu Nidal was originally a member of Fatah, the leading guerrilla organization within the PLO. By 1970, Abu Nidal was turning against the Fatah. While assigned as the Fatah representative to Baghdad he began to attack the PLO on the Voice of Palestine, the PLO's radio station in Baghdad.<sup>47</sup> Abu Nidal saw the writing on the wall that Fatah was going to change its ideology from the total destruction of Zionism and Israel toward compromise with them. In 1973, Arafat decided to abandon international terrorism and concentrate on political activity combined with an armed struggle in the occupied territories and against Israel itself. Abu Nidal saw this as treasonous behavior and turned against the PLO leadership. This was the beginning of the Abu Nidal organization.

In September 1973, Abu Nidal conducted his first Iraqi sponsored act of terror out of Baghdad. Fatah began to realize at this time that Abu Nidal was turning into a hired gun for Iraq. In July 1974, Fatah officially removed Abu Nidal as their representative in Baghdad. Abu Nidal responded by attempting to assassinate Abu Mazin (a senior PLO representative). Fatah intelligence uncovered the plot, and put Abu Nidal and his hit-team on trial in October 1974. They sentenced Abu Nidal to death in absentia.<sup>48</sup> This sentence passed on Abu Nidal was most likely the turning point for the organization. Not only was he forced out of the Fatah and extremely bitter, it also drove him into Iraq's arms as a

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<sup>47</sup>Seale, 78.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 91-98.

gunslinger with a vendetta against the PLO. His exploits with the Iraqi's shaped his vision of a very powerful organization that could be paid handsomely for its services.

In the early years, Abu Nidal lived his ideology. There is no doubt that he was originally committed to the ultimate Palestinian cause, the complete annihilation of Israel and the liberation of Palestine. Once Abu Nidal realized the power and control terror for hire provided his organization he lost sight of the Palestinian cause. He concentrated on his personal goals and core organizational survival.

Abu Nidal based his ideology on the Ba'athist movement. The Ba'athist's opposed all attempts to solve the Israeli-Arab conflict by political or diplomatic means.<sup>49</sup> Abu Nidal said in one of his interviews: "Our program is based on Fatah's program, total destruction of the Zionist entity. Participation in Arab unity. The Path of Pan-Arabism. Building a democratic people's regime in which Palestine is a homeland. In other words, our struggle is for the liberation of Palestine, in which we wish to establish a secular democratic state."<sup>50</sup> Abu Nidal still uses this ideology and the symbol of Deir Yasin<sup>51</sup> to legitimize his organization in the eyes of the Palestinian people and the Arab world and to delegitimize the Israeli government without direct acts of violence.

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<sup>49</sup>Yossi Melman, The Master Terrorist: The True Story of Abu Nidal (New York: Adama Books, 1986), 76.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>51</sup>Deir Yasin was an Arab village where a Jewish underground is alleged to have slaughtered about 200 Arab civilians in the 1948 war, and more recently the massacre by Lebanese Christians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps in September 1982, when the Israeli armed forces had approved the Christians' entry into these camps. ( Ibid., 79)

Abu Nidal's ideology began to change in the late 1970's. By the early to mid 1980's, his actions were no longer aimed at the Palestinian cause but seemed self serving and mercenary. Patrick Seales commented on Abu Nidal, "He had come a long way from his early commitment to the Palestinian cause. He had become a gun for hire, a nihilist."<sup>52</sup> More so than a gun for hire Abu Nidal was steering the organization in the direction that kept him the most secure and his organization the strongest. Seale also said that his investigation of Abu Nidal convinced him that what Abu Nidal "cared most about was the millions tucked away in foreign banks together with his personal security, which in turn dictated his political relations with his host countries."<sup>53</sup>

In order for Abu Nidal to keep his organization under his control and sole authority, he continually purged his ranks whenever he felt threatened. In one of many instances of internal dissension, Abu Nidal ordered the execution of dozens of his men he believed were plotting to mutiny and assassinate him in 1989.<sup>54</sup>

In mid 1979, when Abu Nidal was in Sweden for heart surgery, he appointed Naji Allush to head the organization in his absence. Allush became frustrated that even from his hospital bed Abu Nidal was still giving the orders and running the show. Allush became disenchanted with the Abu Nidal and decided to split from the organization with several top individuals instead of staging a coup. The turmoil created by the split was not felt at the lower ranks. Abu Nidal used the split to create a new leadership core within

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<sup>52</sup>Seale, 242.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 202.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 31.

the group. This was not a purge but it allowed Abu Nidal to reorganize and surround himself with loyal individuals.<sup>55</sup>

During the "war of the camps" Abu Nidal's men came to aid the Palestinian refugees against the Syrian backed Shi'ites.<sup>56</sup> Within the Lebanon leadership a new power base formed, a direct threat to Abu Nidal himself. According to Seale, "Abu Nidal ordered the mass liquidation of his men in Lebanon (eliminating nearly half his members) . . . he wanted to destroy the autonomous group that had emerged in Lebanon . . . regain full control, and go underground in Libya."<sup>57</sup> Abu Nidal was the organization, and he would not allow a new and powerful leadership within the organization to rise. He was no longer supporting the Palestinian cause or he would have continued to build the army in Lebanon. Between 1987-1988 alone, Abu Nidal had about 600 of his own people killed, amounting to nearly half his total organization.<sup>58</sup> His sole goal was organization survival.

Abu Nidal was once an idealist in the Palestinian fight for Palestine. He backed the hard line for total expulsion of Israelites from Palestine. As the PLO softened its line for a realistic solution to the problem he broke away and attacked the very essence of his

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>56</sup>During the "War of the Camps" Abu Nidal's men in Lebanon joined forces with the PLO and once again were part of the main stream Palestinian forces. This caused the organization to grow tremendously. As the fighting raged on the organization grew to accommodate the mass uprising.

<sup>57</sup>Seale, 221.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 288.

being. Iraq saw him as a usable asset in its war for control within the Arab states. This relationship changed Abu Nidal from an idealist working toward the ultimate solution to a man preoccupied with money and power.

## **B. THE FLQ**

In the 1960's and 1970's, political turmoil in Quebec was greater than any other province in Canada. The underlying cause for this turmoil was the French Canadian fear that the English "way of life" would engulf their culture. This fear of losing their sense of self produced a revolutionary fever propagating wave after wave of Front De Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) cells and networks.<sup>59</sup> The FLQ was born in 1962 out of the socialist and separatist turmoil in the universities.<sup>60</sup> The FLN in Algeria, the Cuban revolution and Ché Guevara's Foco theory of revolution, inspired those who founded the FLQ.

The Canadian government succeeded in eliminating most FLQ cells during the 1960's. Society remained supportive to the FLQ's cause, sustaining conditions favorable for continued violence. Once the FLQ committed their "critical error," the Canadian government isolated the remaining FLQ cells rendering them politically unacceptable within the FLQ's own following.

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<sup>59</sup>Gustave Morf, Terror in Quebec: Case Studies of the FLQ (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1970), preface.

<sup>60</sup>James Stewart, The FLQ: Seven Years of Terrorism (Richmond Hill, Canada: Simon & Schuster of Canada LTD., 1970), 6.

The Canadian government's success in eliminating most of the FLQ cells was a direct result of the FLQ's criminal fund raising activities to finance their operations. Between 1963 and the summer of 1970 there were seven major FLQ cells. Of those seven cells, four were broken up by police during robberies or as a result of robbery investigations; reward money offered by the Canadian government led to the elimination of two cells and a neighbor's tip of a "suspicious" man eliminated the last cell.

The FLQ case study is broken down into three phases: pre-critical error, critical error, and post-critical error. Each phase will evaluate the state's actions to defeat the terrorist organization, how the terrorist organization responded, and what possible options, offered by the model, the state could have chosen to influence decline. I will show the affect government policies had on the terrorist organization, specifically which intervention strategies promoted terrorist organization decline and which delegitimized the state thereby strengthening the terrorist organization.

### **1. The FLQ's Pre Critical Error Phase**

The first FLQ wave rose from the RIN (*Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale*), and the ASIQ (*Action socialiste pour l'indépendance du Québec*) independence movements. The French Canadian political and intellectual elites in Quebec formed the RIN in 1960. They believed that Quebec should no longer be under English-Canadian economic and political control.<sup>61</sup> The ASIQ was slightly left of RIN and socialist in

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<sup>61</sup>Louis Fournier, trans. Edward Baxter, FLQ: The Anatomy of an Underground Movement (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1984), 16.



nature. Raoul Roy, ASIQ leader, preached the revolutionary gospel of the independence-socialist movement. He became the FLQ's ideological mentor.<sup>62</sup>

In February 1963, three RIN activists, Raymond Villeneuve, Gabriel Hudon and Georges Schoeters, created the FLQ.<sup>63</sup> They marked the FLQ's "birth" on March 7, 1963, when they bombed three Canadian Army Barracks.<sup>64</sup> Bombing became the FLQ's "mark" for the duration of the 1960's. The FLQ raided construction sites for dynamite, caps and ancillary equipment to support their operations.

The Canadian Government's first attempt to crush the FLQ in April 1963 resulted in backlash against the state, legitimizing the FLQ's claims of English-Canadian oppression. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) did not have sufficient intelligence to target the FLQ infrastructure, instead the RCMP conducted a "dragnet" operation on April 12. The RCMP used illegal searches and arrested about 20 leftist activists without warrants.<sup>65</sup> Quebecers widely condemned the arrests, giving credence to the FLQ's claims. The RCMP ignored civil liberties too early in the struggle. Extra legal operations like this delegitimize the state while legitimizing the terrorist organization.

On 20 April 1963, the first FLQ victim died. A bomb was placed in the back ally of the Canadian Army Recruiting Centre at 772 Sherbrooke Street West. The

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>63</sup>Stewart, 7.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Fournier, 33.

monument of the Father of the Canadian Confederation, John A. Macdonald, in Dominion Square was the original target, but the area was too populated. The FLQ activists decided to place the bomb behind the seemingly deserted Recruiting Centre. When the bomb detonated it killed a passing night watchman, Vincent Wilfrid O'Neill.<sup>66</sup> O'Neill's death released shock and outrage. Virtually everyone in the province, including the three major separatist parties, denounced the FLQ.<sup>67</sup> O'Neill's death also created dissension within the existing cells, but the leadership quelled it with the explanation of "(a) revolution, alas, cannot be achieved without the spilling of blood."<sup>68</sup> The Canadian or Quebec governments could have used this backlash period to isolate the FLQ and eliminate the FLQ's support base with a propaganda campaign.

In May 1963, the Quebec government offered a \$60,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of FLQ activists.<sup>69</sup> The reward became the downfall of the first FLQ cell. Jean-Jacques Lanciault, an FLQ activist, contacted the RCMP with intelligence on the FLQ and collected the \$60,000.00 reward. The RCMP used Lanciault's intelligence to arrest 23 activists including the FLQ leadership (Villeneuve, Hudon and Schoeters).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Morf, 5-6.

<sup>67</sup>Stewart, 11.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.,12.

<sup>69</sup>Fournier, 37.

<sup>70</sup>Morf, 10.

The FLQ did not die after these arrests. They had not committed a critical error nor had Quebec society tired of the violence. The belief in a sovereign independent Quebec was still alive and strong. The few FLQ activists not arrested in May began to stir new FLQ activity. These new cells were not under a central authority, they were independent cells using the symbolism of the letters FLQ.<sup>71</sup>

One of the new cells picked up where the first left off and formed an FLQ military wing, the *Armée de libération du Québec* (ALQ). Two ALQ members had a vendetta against the government, police had arrested Jean Gagnon's and Robert Hudon's brothers with the first cell.<sup>72</sup> The ALQ conducted mostly raids on construction sites and robberies in preparation for political operations.

By the end of March 1964, the RCMP was under extreme pressure to quell the activities of the new FLQ cells, specifically the ALQ robberies. The RCMP set up a Combined Anti-Terrorist Squad (CATS) comprising RCMP, Montreal police and Quebec provincial police to destroy the FLQ.<sup>73</sup> During a "fund raising" operation on April 9, 1964, CATS captured three ALQ members, Jean Lasalle, Jean Gagnon, and René Deon. CATS found a rent receipt on one member, leading them to an ALQ hide site, a garage. CATS set up on the garage and tailed ALQ members to several more safe

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<sup>71</sup>Stewart, 22.

<sup>72</sup>Morf, 36.

<sup>73</sup>Fournier, 54.

houses and hide sites.<sup>74</sup> By mid-May, police arrested eight members, the core of the ALQ.

After police defeated the ALQ, another cell, the *Armée révolutionnaire du Québec* (ARQ) sprang up to take its place. Three former Canadian soldiers formed ARQ in June 1964. Pierre Tousignant, Gilles Trucot, and François Schirm.<sup>75</sup> Schirm was anxious to begin operations. His impatience led to a botched raid on International Firearms, a gunsmith shop in Montreal. During the raid, an employee alerted police to the robbery. In the ensuing shootout, two employees were killed and police arrested four of the five ARQ members. After the operation the police picked six other ARQ members in the area. Police captured the fifth ARQ raid member a few days later.<sup>76</sup>

In January 1966 Pierre Vallieres and Charles Gagnon formed the first socialist branch of the FLQ. They no longer just wanted an independent Quebec. They also looked to free the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. This was a break from the past, Vallieres and Gagnon targeted the unions, workers and students.<sup>77</sup>

For a nationalist-separatist movement, the FLQ had not yet established a support base within Quebec society. Without central authority and control, each FLQ cell had to generate their own funds to conduct operations. On August 27, 1966, CATS arrested three members of the Vallieres/Gagnon group after an attempted theater hold up.

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>75</sup>Stewart, 25.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>77</sup>Morf, 81.

Interrogating Rhéal Mathieu, one of the captured activists, gave the RCMP sufficient intelligence to smash the Vallieres/Gagnon group in two weeks.<sup>78</sup> Canadian and Quebec authorities could have used these criminal activities in a propaganda campaign to isolate the FLQ from the FLQ's supposed constituents.

The FLQ was quiet through the end of 1967, although they conducted limited bombings to make their presence known. The greatest blow to the Canadian government came from French President Charles de Gaulle's visit on July 24, 1967.<sup>79</sup> De Gaulle said France would support the Quebec people in their fight for a free Quebec. De Gaulle's visit prompted a resurgence in separatist fever; it also promoted Canadian Prime Minister Pearson to call together the Security Panel in Ottawa on August 14, 1967. The Security Panel came to the conclusion that separatism was now a greater threat than communism. The FLQ was no longer just a security threat it had now become a "serious political threat."<sup>80</sup>

The next major cell arose from the most violent demonstration in the history of the Canadian labor movement, February 27, 1968.<sup>81</sup> Police brutality drove some RIN activists into the arms of the FLQ. Pierre-Paule Geoffroy and his friends joined up with another small FLQ cell led by Normand Roy. Together they formed a new "network"

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<sup>78</sup>Fournier, 102.

<sup>79</sup>Stewart, 38.

<sup>80</sup>Fournier, 115.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 127.

called the *Front de liberation des travailleurs du Quebec*. Influenced by the Vallieres/Gagnon group, they decided to support the worker's movement.<sup>82</sup>

Through a little luck the police captured Pierre-Paule Geoffroy on March 4, 1969. After a call from a neighbor on a "suspicious bearded man," police conducted a search of the "man's" apartment and located not only Geoffroy but dynamite, caps and two unprimed bombs.<sup>83</sup> Subsequent arrests broke up the *Front de liberation des travailleurs du Quebec* network.

On August 22, 1969, Canada's government started to implement policies decreasing the FLQ's freedom of movement. Rémi Paul, the new Minister of Justice, announced a "ten-point programme to combat terrorism and subversion." The program included increased surveillance on suspected groups and locations. On October 19, Trudeau condemned the separatist movement in Quebec after some bloody riots. He said the violence had gone on long enough and the government had to take necessary steps to quell the violence. One of these steps was Bylaw 3926, banning demonstrations and some public meetings.<sup>84</sup> Another step taken by police was a series of crackdowns on far left organizations.

The police crackdowns in late 1969 generated two more major FLQ cells. The most deadly of these was the combined efforts of Jacques Lanctôt and Paul Rose. They initially met during the Saint-Jean Baptiste Day riot, June 24, 1968, then decided

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<sup>82</sup>Morf, 129.

<sup>83</sup>Fournier, 152.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 170.

to combine their efforts and form a new FLQ network.<sup>85</sup> Robert Hudon formed the other major cell. These two cells led the violence that spiraled into the October Crisis, the FLQ's critical error.<sup>86</sup>

The FLQ resumed their bombing campaign in May 7. The renewed bombing campaign brought the police back on the prowl. They broke up Robert Hudon's cell on March 12, 1970. Police arrested two of Hudon's members during an attempted bank robbery in Montreal. Police eliminated the remainder of Hudon's cell on May 28, with the arrest of five FLQ members including Robert and Gabriel Hudon.<sup>87</sup>

Before the October Crisis, the police broke up two kidnaping operations by the Lanctôt cell. Police foiled the first attempt when they stopped Lanctôt and another FLQ member for a vehicle violation. Police did not question why Lanctôt had a wicker basket large enough to fit a human body until after they released him on bail.<sup>88</sup> Police disrupted the second kidnaping attempt after a Montreal University student tipped the police off for the \$50,000.00 reward.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Ronald D. Crelinsten, "The Internal Dynamics of the FLQ During the October Crisis of 1970", Inside Terrorist Organizations, ed. David C. Rapoport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 65-66.

<sup>86</sup>The October Crisis began on October 5, 1970, when the FLQ first kidnapped James Cross, the commercial attaché for the British High Commissioner's staff. The FLQ's critical error occurred when they kidnapped then executed Pierre Laporte, the Quebec Minister of Labor and Immigration.

<sup>87</sup>Fournier, 195.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 183. Vallieres also discusses the first two foiled kidnapping attempts, 37.

<sup>89</sup>John Saywell, Quebec 70: A Documentary Narrative (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 31.

By mid-September 1970, Lanctôt and Rose reorganized their network. A disagreement on how quickly they should attempt another political kidnapping, fractured the group. Lanctôt took the members who wanted immediate action and formed the *Libération* cell. The *Libération* cell began planning *Opération Libération* to kidnap James Cross, the commercial attaché for the British High Commissioner's staff.<sup>90</sup> Rose took the remaining members and formed the *Chénier* cell. The *Chénier* cell left for the United States in search of funds to support FLQ operations.<sup>91</sup>

## **2. The Critical Error Phase: The October Crisis**

The *Libération* cell kidnapped James Cross on October 5, 1970.<sup>92</sup> The FLQ gave seven demands for Cross's release.<sup>93</sup> Trudeau and his cabinet decided that they

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<sup>90</sup>Fournier, 215.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 214.

<sup>92</sup>Saywell, 34. The October Crisis is also covered in great detail from the FLQ point of view by Vallières, from the media's point of view by R.D. Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning: Terrorism as a Struggle over Access to the Communication Structure" Contemporary Research on Terrorism ed Paule Wilkinson and Alasdair M. Stewart (Aberdeen Md: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), and by a Montreal journalist, Peter Desbarats, "In Our Weeks of Anguish: A Journal of October" Saturday Night 85 (December 1970).

<sup>93</sup>FLQ demands for Cross

1. the police make no attempts to locate Cross [not read by government officials]
  2. the publication of the FLQ manifesto
  3. the release of 23 political prisoners
  4. an airplane to take them to Cuba or Algeria
  5. the rehiring of the "*gars de Lapalme*"
  6. a "voluntary tax" of \$500,000.00 to be placed on the airplane
  7. the name of the informer who "sold out" the FLQ at Prevost.
- Fournier, 218.



would not accept the demands for Cross's release but they would "seek a basis for negotiation." Bourassa, the Quebec Premier, agreed with Trudeau.<sup>94</sup>

The police carried out nearly one thousand raids and searches between 7-10 October looking for Cross. They arrested, questioned, then released about fifty people in the raids. Police rearrested these individuals after Trudeau implemented the War Measures Act later that month.<sup>95</sup>

The *Libération* cell issued several communiques for Cross's release. The last communique set midnight October 10 as the deadline for the state to release 23 political prisoners and airlift to a foreign country in exchange for Cross. At 2340 on the 10th the state responded with a "NO!". The only concession they provided the liberation cell was airlift to a foreign country.<sup>96</sup>

Without *Libération* cell's knowledge, Rose's *Chénier* cell responded to Trudeau's "NO" by kidnaping Pierre Laporte at 1818 on October 10.<sup>97</sup> Laporte was the Quebec Minister of Labor and Immigration.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Saywell, 34. and Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning," 423.

<sup>95</sup>Fournier, 222.

<sup>96</sup>Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning," 423.

<sup>97</sup>Fournier, 231.

<sup>98</sup>Fernand Beaugard, "Who Inspired the FLQ Terrorists?" Atlas 19 (December 1970): 24.

Trudeau requested the media down play the crisis so not to give the FLQ legitimacy.<sup>99</sup> Trudeau decided to raise the ante and go on the offensive against the FLQ rather than play tit for tat at the current FLQ activity level. Early morning on October 15, Trudeau moved the Canadian Army into Quebec then "officially" terminated negotiations with the FLQ.<sup>100</sup>

At 0400 on 16 October, Trudeau implemented the War Measures Act, declaring a state of "apprehended insurrection." Officially suspending the Canadian Declaration of Rights. At dawn the police, with the army's support, began the sweep to pick up their list of individuals. Authorities eventually detained more than 500 people, releasing about 90% after about a week without charges.<sup>101</sup> The public responded favorably to the War Measures Act; in Quebec 32 percent believed it was not "tough enough" and 54 percent felt it was "about right."<sup>102</sup>

Trudeau justified the early morning action by citing the need to take the initiative and surprise the FLQ. Formal authorization from Parliament would have tipped off the FLQ. Prior to dawn, and the announcement, the police arrested high profile

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<sup>99</sup>Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning," goes into great detail on how Trudeau and other Canadian authorities turned the tide on the FLQ by manipulating the media. The media focused on the states activities eliminating the FLQ's power of voice. Society slowly began to lose sympathy for the FLQ and redirect their loyalty to the Quebec government.

<sup>100</sup>Dan G. Loomis, Not Much Glory: Quelling the FLQ (Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1984), 138.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>102</sup>Saywell, 93-94.

sympathizers (intellectuals, entertainers and media figures) and known FLQ members, 154 in all.<sup>103</sup>

The *Chénier* cell executed Laporte on 17 October, responding to the state's refusal to negotiate. The FLQ finally committed their critical error. There was wide spread backlash against the FLQ. What the FLQ thought would produce the revolution, in fact produced a surge of support for the government.<sup>104</sup> Even the PQ condemned their actions, "they have killed (the cause) along with Mr. Laporte."<sup>105</sup> Far left organizations joined forces pleading with the government to negotiate with the FLQ to prevent similar actions against Cross.

The liberation cell issued a communique and a letter from Cross reemphasizing the release of Cross in exchange for the FLQ prisoners.<sup>106</sup> Authorities did not respond to the communique; they had the police out in full force looking for Cross. The police had been picking up a few activists in several raids and routine searches but the main activists remained at large. With each raid they received a little more intelligence that in turn lead to another safe house or cache.

A new FLQ cell appeared in mid-November. Nigel Hamer formed the *Information Viger* cell with four others "veteran" FLQ members.<sup>107</sup> The police infiltrated

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<sup>103</sup>Loomis, 141.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>105</sup>Fournier, 255.

<sup>106</sup>Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning," 149.

<sup>107</sup>Fournier, 262.

the new *Viger* cell through an informant named Carole de Vault. She was friends with one of its members who kept her informed of the cell activities.<sup>108</sup>

Through good police work the RCMP found Cross's location. By tailing de Vault, police tracked other members of the *Viger* cell, which in turn led them to other safe houses and other members. By November 22 the police had identified Hammer, the last *Viger* cell member. On November 25 they located the safe house containing Cross. Twenty-four hour surveillance on the house soon convinced police that it was Cross's prison.<sup>109</sup>

The police began to move in on December 2. The liberation cell negotiated with the police throughout the night. Authorities and the *Libération* cell finally agreed to safe passage to Cuba, in exchange for Cross.<sup>110</sup>

Around 1400 on December 3, the activists and Cross departed their safe house. Cross was freed at 0200 on December 4. The activists included: Bernard Mergoer, Jacques Lanctôt, Louise Lanctôt, Marc Carbonneau, Yves Langlois, and Jacques Cossette-Trudel.<sup>111</sup>

After Cross's release the police continued their pursuit for the remaining *Libération* and *Chénier* cell members. Through further questioning of these members, the

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<sup>108</sup>Loomis, 157.

<sup>109</sup>Fournier, 267.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 268.

<sup>111</sup>Richard L. Clutterbuck, Living With Terrorism (New York: Arlington House Publishers, 1975), 39.

police finally found the Rose brothers' and Simard's hideout on December 27. The Roses and Simard surrendered to police on the 28th after lengthy negotiations.<sup>112</sup>

The October crisis ended with the arrest of the Rose brothers and Simard. The Public Order Act replaced the War Measures Act in December. This was a public relations move to ease the societal tension associated with the "War Measures Act," since the two were very similar. Trudeau lifted the Public Order Act on April 30, 1971, signifying the end of the FLQ crisis.<sup>113</sup>

### **3. Post Critical Error Phase**

The police did not want to break up the *Viger* cell because they had infiltrated the group and could keep a close eye on their activities. The *Viger* cell was the last vestige of the FLQ that could rejuvenate the movement. If they attempted to start the FLQ back up or any other subversive movement, the police would nip it in the bud. The FLQ tried in vain to reorganize in 1971 but police infiltration made it nearly impossible.<sup>114</sup>

Starting in November 1970, the RCMP infiltrated the FLQ once their agents began committing "serious crimes" to prove their legitimacy as FLQ "activists." The

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<sup>112</sup>Fournier, 270.

<sup>113</sup>Clutterbuck, 40.

<sup>114</sup>Fournier, 282.

RCMP also said that until their agents began to commit these crimes they had limited success in penetrating or establishing informants within the FLQ.<sup>115</sup>

The state and the RCMP believed that activists would attempt to revive the FLQ in 1971 therefore they did not let up with their counter-terrorist policy. On February 12, 1971, the RCMP SIS director approved a new "special operations Programme." The program put infiltration and "human sources" as the top priority. It also included using "power struggles, love affairs, misappropriation of funds, drug abuse etc., to create dissension and rifts . . . " in subversive groups.<sup>116</sup>

Vallieres split with the FLQ on December 13, 1971. He publicly denounced armed violence and said he would join the *Parti quebecois*. Vallieres finally came to the conclusion that the FLQ's struggle was over, that people only saw it as a "radical wing" of the PQ. The FLQ never had a true support base in Quebec society. Vallieres admitted the FLQ was not an "organization" but a collection of groups and cells without centralized leadership or a united strategy, just the letters "FLQ."<sup>117</sup>

The Parti Quebecois emerged stronger than ever from the October Crisis. The October Crisis proved that the Parti Quebecois was the only viable alternative to the revolutionary violence the FLQ preached. The rise of the PQ gave many former activists the opportunity for legal action toward their independence goals. By the end of 1972,

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<sup>115</sup>G. Davidson Smith, Combatting Terrorism (New York: Routledge, 1990), 66.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>117</sup>Gerald, McKnight, The Terrorist Mind (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974), 157.

police had arrested most of the FLQ activists. They had also infiltrated the remaining separatist groups to the point that they could no longer function as subversives.<sup>118</sup> The FLQ planted its last bomb on May 5, 1972.<sup>119</sup>

### C. THE RED BRIGADES

During the 1970's and the early 1980's Italian authorities found themselves combating an insurgency that by the late 1970's propelled them into a national crisis nearly toppling Italian democracy. Italy faced levels of violence far exceeding levels elsewhere in Europe:<sup>120</sup> between 1978 and 1980 there were 6394 acts of political violence resulting in 391 injured and 184 killed.<sup>121</sup>

The radical left was responsible for most of the violence during the 1970's and early 1980's.<sup>122</sup> The Red Brigades formed just after Italy entered a period of both political and economic crisis. By 1968 the Italian government had begun to falter. The Socialists could not develop effective coalitions. This led to a series of eight governments that were plagued by discontent. As the 70's continued, inflation soared, unemployment rose, then, in 1975, the recession began. The government's inability to handle the deteriorating

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<sup>118</sup>Fournier, 336.

<sup>119</sup>Loomis, 145.

<sup>120</sup>Robert H. Evans, "Terrorism and Subversion of the State: Italian Legal Responses", Terrorism and Political Violence, 1:3 (July 1989): 326.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>Vittor S. Pisano, "The Red Brigades: A Challenge to Italian Democracy," Conflict Studies 120 (July 1980): 3.

conditions drained society's confidence in the political system. This acted as a "burning fuse" among youth. For the Red Brigades, this was the "long awaited crisis of capitalism,"<sup>123</sup> the foundation for their revolution. Their aim was to destroy Italian democracy.

As with the previous case study, the Red Brigades are also broken down into three phases: pre-critical error, critical error, and post-critical error. Each phase will evaluate the state's actions to defeat the terrorist organization, how the terrorist organization responded, and what possible options, offered by the model, the state could have chosen to influence decline. I will demonstrate the affect government policies had on the terrorist organization, specifically which intervention strategies promoted terrorist organization decline and which delegitimized the state thereby strengthening the terrorist organization.

Compare the Canadian responses to the FLQ, to the Italian responses to the Red Brigades. Italy's government maintained constitutional liberties throughout the Red Brigade crisis.<sup>124</sup> Unlike the RCMP, Italian police did not use extralegal means to establish their intelligence base nor did they make "arrests in the dark." Parliament expanded police arrest and detention powers considerably, but they also set time limits for detention and monitored police activities.<sup>125</sup> Italy avoided the reactionary responses the Red Brigades were hoping for. Canadian authorities on the other hand, often reacted

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<sup>123</sup>Meade, 69-70.

<sup>124</sup>Evans, 336.

<sup>125</sup>Drake, 350.



repressively reinforcing the legitimacy of the FLQ. Throughout the Red Brigade emergency, the Italian government kept its legitimacy in the eyes of its constituents and came out of the crisis stronger and with increased credibility.

### 1. Red Brigades Pre-Critical Error Phase

On 8 September 1969, Renato Curcio and his wife Margherita Cagol founded the *Collettivo Politico Metropolitano* (Metropolitan Political Collective). This was the foundation for the Red Brigades.<sup>126</sup> Curcio and Cagol developed their political views as student activists at the University of Trento. Curcio believed that there was a direct correlation between the student and worker movements. Curcio decided to combine these two forces into a political revolution, and the Collective was the means to achieve the revolution.<sup>127</sup> The Collective changed its name to *Sinistra proletaria* (Proletarian Left) in early 1970. *Sinistra proletaria* produced a political publication (by the same name) to spread the word of their revolution.<sup>128</sup> *Sinistra proletaria*'s October 1970 issue announced the creation of the Red Brigades. The Red Brigades' communiques told of an organization dedicated on the Marxist tradition of revolution: armed repression of the ruling class in the name of the proletariat, "for every eye, two eyes; for every tooth, an entire face."<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>127</sup>Meade, 39.

<sup>128</sup>Alison Jamieson, The Heart Attacked: Terrorism and Conflict in the Italian State (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1989), 72.

<sup>129</sup>Drake, 11.

The first serious threat to the Italian government was the kidnaping of Judge Mario Sossi in Genoa on 18 April 1974. Sossi's kidnaping was a significant jump in the level of violence. Four thousand police searched unsuccessfully for Sossi.<sup>130</sup> In a communique, the Red Brigades demanded the release of eight political prisoners in exchange for Sossi, or they would execute the judge. Despite the government's refusal to negotiate with the Red Brigades, a court granted an application from Sossi's family for the release of the prisoners. The government appealed the decision, and did not release the prisoners. The Red Brigades freed Sossi after 35 days, without any concessions.<sup>131</sup> This was a huge propaganda success for the Red Brigades, not only were they able to denounce the Italian government, they were also able to publicize their ideology and finally gain national attention.<sup>132</sup> Little did they realize the new attention would destroy them.

In response to the Sossi affair, the Italian government named General Dalla Chiesa as the head of a special anti-terrorist squad of *carabinieri*<sup>133</sup> within his Turnin

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<sup>130</sup>Meade, 52-53.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid, 53.

<sup>132</sup>Jamieson, 81.

<sup>133</sup>Italy had three separate "police" forces all under the auspices of a "state police": the *carabinieri* under the Minister of Defense, the Corps of Public Safety under the Minister of the Interior, and Finance Police under the Minister of Finance. Each branch had their own intelligence gathering operations and worked independently of each other against the Red Brigades. In 1981 all three branches of police were put under civilian administrative control, the Minister of the Interior, but all three still kept their independent operational control. (Meade, 332)

brigade.<sup>134</sup> In September 1974, Chiesa and the *carabinieri* established an informant, Silvano Girotto,<sup>135</sup> willing to infiltrate the Red Brigades. On September 8, at a meeting Girotto set up to join the Red Brigades, the *carabinieri* captured Curcio and Francechini (another *brigatisti*).

The *carabinieri* made other arrests and located several safe houses during September. During these arrests the police noticed a "habitual weakness" of the Red Brigades, they maintained archives, target information and associated intelligence at their safe houses.<sup>136</sup> The intelligence received during the raids enabled the *carabinieri* to target the next layer of the organization, keeping the Red Brigades underground and quiet.

On 22 May 1975, Parliament passed the first law aiding police in the battle against terrorism, law 152 the *legge Reale*. The law allowed police to detain, stop and search individuals, Italian or foreign, who associated with the extreme left, extreme right or the mafia. Legge Reale also suspended provisional liberty (release on bail) for crimes

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<sup>134</sup>Chiesa made a name for himself as a *carabinieri* colonel in Sicily fighting the mafia. In 1973 Chiesa was promoted to General and took the first *carabinieri* brigade in Turin. Chiesa tried to publicize the activities of the *carabinieri* so the people would see that the state was "present and actively defending itself and its laws." Chiesa knew the importance of maintaining the state's legitimacy to keep the people's support behind the government and not the subversives. (Jamieson, 58)

<sup>135</sup>Girotto was a colorful character who started as a thief, did time in the French Foreign Legion, then became an ordained priest (Father Leo) in the Franciscan order. Father Leo went to Bolivia and Chile to help the 'wretched of the earth'. Father Leo developed a theology of armed conflict while in Latin America. When he returned to Italy the press made him famous as 'Friar Machine-Gun'. (Ibid)

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 60.

committed under certain articles. Law 152 increased sentences and preventive detention for specific crimes. It also gave the police more protection, making it difficult to prosecute police for using their fire arms or for using physical force in the line of duty.<sup>137</sup>

In January 1976, Chiesa's men found and rearrested Curcio.<sup>138</sup> By now, the Red Brigades were on the brink of defeat. There were about 15 regulars left, with Mario Moretti emerging as the leader. Faced with defeat Moretti had two alternatives to choose from, admit defeat or escalate the violence and start a war. Moretti chose war.<sup>139</sup> This was the end of the first wave of *brigatisti*, Moretti would soon regroup the Red Brigades and begin an escalated wave of violence.

The Italian Communist Party (PCI) received a substantial increase in votes during the national elections held in June 1976. The Christian Democrat Party (DC) no longer could form a majority coalition without the communists. Aldo Moro, the President of the DC, aided Giulio Andreotti in forming a new government. Moro and Andreotti came to an agreement with Berlinguer, the PCI leader: the DC could withstand a vote of confidence with the abstentions of the left to form a government of "non-opposition."<sup>140</sup> To many youth, the PCI betrayed the revolution, this pushed the radicals into the arms of the Red Brigades.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Evans, 338.

<sup>138</sup>Meade, 68.

<sup>139</sup>Jamieson, 88.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>141</sup>Meade, 80.

There was a student movement in the universities in 1977. Students revolted several times during the year, demonstrating, marching, and taking over the universities. The state responded by adding anti-demonstration articles to the *legge Reale* and passing it on 8 August 1977.<sup>142</sup> These articles did not quell the rising revolutionary fever.

To the Red Brigades, the whole situation was an omen of the revolution. The economy was in ruins, and the university "movement" was spreading the revolutionary flame throughout Italy. The Red Brigades believed the movement was a broad based armed proletariat movement, the base to build the revolution on. Their view was flawed though: the movement was mainly a student movement with mixed ideologies. It was not a worker's movement or an ideological movement.<sup>143</sup> These misperceptions contributed to their downfall. They never had the proletariat's support; they never swam in friendly waters.

As the internal situation deteriorated, Italy's "non-opposition" government fell in January 1978. In February, Moro met with Berlinguer and came up with a solution to the governmental crisis. Moro proposed: (a) a common program of political and economic measures to meet the emergency; (b) affirmative votes by the other parties for the government (rather than the previous abstentions); and (c) a pledge to cooperate in promptly enacting the program. The PCI would become a formal part of the majority in parliament but not in the government (they would not hold cabinet positions).<sup>144</sup> By

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<sup>142</sup>Evans, 339.

<sup>143</sup>Meade, 96.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 99.

March 1, Moro brought the DC factions together to approve his solution. Parliament set deliberations for the new cabinet for 16 March, a day party leaders knew would go down in Italian political history. The Red Brigades ensured that it did.

## **2. The Critical Error Phase**

The Red Brigades committed several critical errors. Each one could have brought them down, had the state used the periods of backlash to launch a propaganda campaign together with direct action. Instead, the Italian government allowed the Red Brigades to regroup and justify their actions.

The Red Brigades kidnaped Aldo Moro the morning of March 16. Backlash was substantial from all quarters of society. The union federation called a nation wide strike. Millions of people took to the streets. Christian Democrats and communists alike stood together against the actions of the Red Brigades.<sup>145</sup> This popular anti-*brigatisti* sentiment did not last though. A combination of police, *carabinieri* and finance guards set up approximately thirteen hundred road blocks a day, one-hundred sixty in Rome alone. The police searched "tens of thousands" of homes in hopes of locating Moro. Many doors were smashed in when the tenants were not home. Society's patience began to wear thin when it appeared the inconvenience of road blocks and damage sustained during searches accomplished nothing.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>Jamieson, 120-122.

<sup>146</sup>Meade, 122.

The government was united in their response not to negotiate with the terrorists. The Red Brigades issued several communiques accusing Moro of crimes against the people, that a people's tribunal would try him. The sixth communique issued on 15 April said that Moro had been found guilty and sentenced to death. Authorities realized that any concession given to the Red Brigades, in exchange for Moro, would be catastrophic for the state and only lead to legitimize Red Brigade propaganda. 15 Italian authorities rejected all concessions offered by the Red Brigades. On the morning of 9 May 1978, Aldo Moro bled to death in the trunk of a car after being shot extensively by two *brigatisti*.

The Moro affair displayed the vast inadequacies of Italian counter-terrorism/insurgency capabilities. Initially after the incident, authorities released names and photos of suspects, of which very few were Red Brigades let alone involved in the kidnaping. They were slow to react to intelligence. They failed to tail leftist organization leaders to see if they were keeping contact with the Red Brigades. The individual "police" forces did not coordinate their efforts. There was no core group in charge of the investigation. Higher authority did not release the magistrate in charge of the case of other duties, nor did he have a "terrorist expert" to help him. Nor did the Italians have a central comprehensive data base on the Red Brigades.<sup>147</sup>

In response to Aldo Moro's death, Parliament passed law 191, "Penal and trial norms for the prevention and repression of serious crimes," on 18 May 1978. It increased

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<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 174-177.

the police's power to track terrorists, authorized wire taps without special demonstration of cause, and authorized 24 hour detention for individuals refusing to reveal their identity or with suspicious papers.<sup>148</sup> The state also established a national anti-terrorist group under the Minister of the Interior, headed by Chiesa. Chiesa selected 180 *carabinieri* and 50 police, who began proper counter-terrorist intelligence work with results "not long in coming."<sup>149</sup>

The Moro incident did unite the "diverse terrorist groups of the left" by maintaining a crisis atmosphere through the remainder of 1978. What this atmosphere did produce for the Red Brigades was a feeling of invincibility. On January 24, 1979 they assassinated Guido Rossa in his car. Rossa was an Italian Communist's communist, a factory worker who supported the communist party line of anti-terrorism.<sup>150</sup>

Rossa's death caused spontaneous eruptions of strikes and demonstrations in all the major factories of Genoa to protest the "Fascist Brigadists." More than half a million people lined the streets of Genoa for his televised funeral.<sup>151</sup> The backlash from Rossa's death far exceeded the reaction to Moro's death. This was the second critical error for the Red Brigades; it could have brought them down. The state failed to capitalize on the backlash and unleash a propaganda blitz on the country. This could have

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<sup>148</sup>Evans, 340.

<sup>149</sup>Meade, 181.

<sup>150</sup>Drake, 79.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.



delegitimized the Red Brigades organization, promoted dissension among its members and broke them up.

In the summer of 1979, the Red Brigades sustained a major schism. On 25 July 1979 Lotta Continua published an anonymous article, later attributed to captured *brigatisti* Valerio Morucci and Adriana Faranda. It contained a fierce accusation against "the strategic direction" of the Red Brigades. Morucci and Faranda accused the Red Brigades of having "too much arrogance and too much presumption" for mistaking 1979 Italy for 1917 Russia or 1949 China.<sup>152</sup> This was a continuation of the schism that started with the Aldo Moro affair. The group did not meet their strategic objectives during or after the Moro crisis and this resulted in internal dissension. The Rossa affair further fueled the internal crisis culminating in the Morucci/Faranda denunciation. Red Brigade's leadership responded to this outward questioning of Red Brigadism by escalating the level of violence to prove to both group members and supporters that they were still alive and well.

Morucci and Faranda's article demonstrates the terrorist organization's vulnerability to psychological attack after a critical error. Their article showed the internal dissension created by the Moro and Rossa affairs' backlash. Red Brigade members began to question the group's direction and decision making ability. Authorities must capitalize on this internal crisis by targeting the group's identity. A propaganda campaign directed

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<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 102.

at the Red Brigade's identity (Terrorism As a System, Figure 1) would have increased the *pentiti* rate even further, hastening the decline of the group.

As the new year unfolded, the Red Brigades were in the throws of defeat. On 6 February 1980, Parliament passed Law 15.<sup>153</sup> Law 15 looked favorably on those who would dissociate themselves "from the other (*brigatista*), would try to prevent criminal activity being carried to its full consequences, or would concretely help the police and the judicial authority to obtain decisive proof to identify and capture" terrorists. For these individuals, the *pentiti*, Law 15 could reduce life sentences 12 to 20 years, and cut other sentences in half. It was the most severe anti-terrorist law passed yet, but also the most generous to the *pentiti*. The police then began a campaign to coopt repentant terrorists.

On 20 February General Chiesa announced the capture of Rocco Micalotto and Patrizio Peci, two of the most wanted and feared Red Brigade chiefs. Shortly after his capture, Peci publicly abandoned the Red Brigades. Peci was the leader of the Turin column and a member of the Strategic Direction. The information he provided the police brought devastation to the Red Brigades, it directly resulted in 85 *brigatisti* arrests and the location of many bases.<sup>154</sup> These arrests quieted the Red Brigades until the fall of 1980. The *pentiti* laws were killing the Red Brigades.

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<sup>153</sup>Law 15 stated: (a) All crimes of terrorism or subversion of the democratic order that were not punishable with life sentences would be doubled; (b) Attempted murder was increased to 20 yrs, 18 yrs for serious lesions (knee capping), and all penalties would be increased for crimes against a member of the government, parliament, judiciary or the police; and (c) Terrorist suspects could be detained for 48 hrs. (Evans, 340)

<sup>154</sup>Meade, 194.

The Red Brigades began another offensive on 27 October 1980 with an unsuccessful prison break. In late November, they conducted four kidnappings. The second kidnapping was Giuseppe Taliercio, director of Montedison in Porto Marghera. The Red Brigades justified the kidnapping, by saying Taliercio was a "servant of the imperialist multinationals" and having mercilessly exploited the workers of Montedison for more than thirty years, he would now have to face proletarian justice.<sup>155</sup> The Taliercio kidnapping resulted in extreme backlash. Contrary to their expectations (provoking a surge of revolutionary fervor and gratitude among the workers), the incident induced a protest march of sixty-thousand demonstrators in Mestre against the "Nazi Red Brigadists."<sup>156</sup> Again this was a critical error for the Red Brigades that Italian authorities could have exploited.

In one last attempt to revitalize the revolution the Red Brigades targeted NATO assets. On 17 December 1981, the Red Brigades kidnaped General James Lee Dozier, Deputy Chief of Staff for logistics and administration at NATO's headquarters in Southern Europe.<sup>157</sup> The Red Brigades' goal in kidnapping General Dozier was to help in their quest for a mass following. Their previously selected targets had not won them the support of the proletariat. What they did not realize was that a foreign target would unite the security forces against them, this was the final straw in their decline.

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<sup>155</sup>Drake, 140.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>157</sup>Jamieson, 191.

All Italian security force elements were committed to NATO and did not want to seem incompetent before their NATO counterparts, especially the Americans. So they put aside their differences and cooperated on the Dozier case.<sup>158</sup> The police received a tip on Dozier's location from an informant. On 27 Jan 1982, the police surrounded an apartment house on Via Pindemonte in Padua. They waited until the morning rush hour covered their movements then a NOCS team assaulted the apartment. They captured five terrorists, along with submachine guns, hand grenades, plastic explosives, ammunition, money, false ID cards and intelligence on political and prominent leaders in the area.<sup>159</sup>

### **3. Post Critical Error Phase**

The greatest intelligence received on the Red Brigades was that they would not put up a fight when cornered.<sup>160</sup> Authorities released this information to the public. The humiliation created within the Red Brigades caused an implosion within the organization, increasing the *pentiti* rate above any other period. To alleviate the increased *pentiti* rate, Parliament passed law 304 on 29 May 1982, which quickly became known as the *pentiti* Law. It distinguished between dissociation from terrorism and collaboration with the authorities. Dissociation brought forth a reduction in life-sentences to 15 to 21 years and decreased other sentences by one third. Collaboration brought forth a reduction in life-sentence to 10-12 years, and decreased other sentences by one half not to exceed

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<sup>158</sup>Paul Bookbinder, "A Red Brigades Mistake," TVI Journal 3:5 (1982): 4.

<sup>159</sup>Drake, 146.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

10 years. Exceptional information could reduce sentences by another third.<sup>161</sup> The sole purpose of law 304 was to defeat terrorism by bringing terrorist forward, convincing imprisoned terrorists they had been defeated, to admit their guilt and provide intelligence on their brethren.<sup>162</sup> The intelligence gained from the *pentiti* increased as more raids and arrests smashed the remaining Red Brigades infrastructure through the end of 1982.

#### 4. Summary

Two main reasons for Italy's success in defeating the Red Brigades were their ability to maintain constitutional liberties and not resort to extralegal means during the emergency. They did not form death squads, they did not have hidden prisons, nor did they make "arrests in the dark." The use of torture was also rare.<sup>163</sup> Parliament preserved the right to counsel and legal representation, and the presumption of innocence. Authorities did not censor the press.<sup>164</sup> Parliament expanded police powers considerably concerning arrests and detention. They also set time limits and enforced them through monitoring.<sup>165</sup> The state avoided reactionary responses, which the Red Brigades were

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<sup>161</sup>Evans, 342.

<sup>162</sup>*Ibid.*, 343.

<sup>163</sup>The only documented torture case the author found was during the trial of *brigatisti* Di Lenardo, the four police officers responsible were put to trial, found guilty, and sentenced to prison. The police medical examiner found about fifty electric burn marks on Di Lenardo's testicles. See Richard Oliver Collin and Gordon L. Freedman, Winter of Fire: The Abduction of General Dozier and the Downfall of the Red Brigades (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1990), 224.

<sup>164</sup>Meade, 217.

<sup>165</sup>Drake, 350.

hoping for. Through all this the Italian government kept its legitimacy in the eyes of its constituents and came out of the emergency stronger with increased credibility.

The Italian government could have defeated the Red Brigades sooner had it consolidated its security forces. It wasn't until the Dozier affair that the "police" forces banded together and pooled their resources for an all out assault on the Red Brigades.<sup>166</sup> The Italian secret service could have also been a factor in increasing the pace of Red Brigades decline. In the late 1960's and early 1970's the state charged SID with Parliamentary espionage, sponsoring right wing terrorism, and corruption.<sup>167</sup> Reform was necessary but the timing could not have been worse. The Italian secret service (SID) was in the process of being restructured into the SISMI<sup>168</sup> and the SISDE<sup>169</sup> prior to the Moro affair. Neither SISMI nor SISDE was operational by 16 March. Higher authority disbanded Chiesa's group and the larger SDS and transferred their experienced personnel out of the anti-terrorism arena. Authorities disbanded the SID before forming SISMI and SISDE, leaving a gap in operational capabilities when they were needed most.

Italy had come perilously close to the edge of collapse. Government instability made it clear that they had to maintain opposition support so the system would not fail and democracy would prevail. Aldo Moro had sufficient forethought to establish

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<sup>166</sup>Evans, 334.

<sup>167</sup>Ibid., 333.

<sup>168</sup>SISMI is the military secret service in charge of external security, espionage and counter-espionage. ( Meade, 176)

<sup>169</sup>SISDE is the information service charged with internal security. (Ibid)

a working relationship with the PCI to save not only the DC party but Italy itself. He knew the time had come to include the PCI in the government, building a united front against terrorism. Through it all the government maintained civil liberties reducing the terrorist's base of support, while the security forces conducted effective police work together destroying the Red Brigades.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The FLQ case study displayed the RCMP's extralegal counter-terrorist policy and intelligence gathering means propagated continuous FLQ cells and networks. The RCMP had for years, before obtaining increased legal authority, illegally opened mail, entered premises surreptitiously, conducted illegal searches and framed suspects.<sup>170</sup> As police eliminated a cell or network, another formed to take its place. Not until the October Crisis, the FLQ's critical error, did Quebec society turn against the FLQ and accept the War Measures Act.

The Red Brigades showed that even after committing several critical errors, the group could operate at a significant level. The Red Brigades imploded once Italian authorities used the backlash to their advantage. The Italian government was internally weak. The DC had to maintain PCI support to keep the government from falling. DC's fragile alliance with the PCI precluded the government from repressing Italian society. They had to keep police operations legitimate, good police work vice illegal intelligence

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<sup>170</sup>Fournier, 135.

operations. Italy as a whole emerged stronger politically from the Red Brigade crisis, whereas the Canadian left emerged stronger from the FLQ crisis.



## V CONCLUSION

The primary concern and focus for a state, when conducting counter-terrorist operations is not to overreact. A state must maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of its constituents. A repressive government will give the terrorist organization legitimacy and substantiate its rhetoric. This may push marginal individuals into the terrorists awaiting hands.

When the state down-plays the terrorist event there is a good chance the terrorists will escalate the level of violence. By escalating violence, the terrorists are trying to force the state to react advantageously to the terrorists. They are trying to get the state to over react and invoke "emergency" legislation, to suspend civil liberties or repress society. These reactions build the terrorist group's identity and increase their base of support. The state must continue to down-play the terrorist actions, and begin a propaganda campaign targeting the terrorist group's identity while developing legislation to promote exit. Then when the terrorist commits a critical error, society will be more apt to accept legislation designed to restrict the terrorist's environment. Eventually the terrorists will over extend their bounds and commit a critical error in their attempt to delegitimize the state. The state must take advantage of the backlash period to enact a strategy aimed at the terrorist's infrastructure. The terrorist organization is at its most vulnerable point. As backlash most often promotes dissension, authorities must act quickly to create a split and eliminate the terrorist infrastructure.

Italian authorities could have eliminated the Red Brigades after the Moro affair if they had they used public backlash in their favor. The *pentiti* did create schisms within the Red Brigades but the Brigades did not implode until Italian authorities began a propaganda campaign against the Red Brigades following the Dozier affair.

Canadian authorities used the October Crisis to move the entire Canadian army and tactical airforce into Quebec against the FLQ.<sup>171</sup> Trudeau supported military intervention by invoking the War Measures Act, which more than 85 percent of Quebec citizens supported. Had Trudeau moved the army in earlier it could have created backlash against the state and prolonged the crisis.

Another key issue for the state during its campaign against terrorism is civil liberties. Suspended civil liberties tend to push fence sitters over the edge into the terrorist's arms. Even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, Italian authorities did not suspend civil liberties. The only time authorities "repressed" Italian society immediately followed the Moro kidnaping. Police set up many road blocks and forced entry into vacant homes in their search for Moro. When the Red Brigades had finally been defeated, Italian democracy emerged stronger than it had in years.

Before the October Crisis in Quebec, extralegal RCMP operations kept producing wave after wave of FLQ activists. Most of these new members knew FLQ activists but normally would not have joined. Only after the Chenier cell assassinated Laporte, FLQ's critical error, did Quebecians show support for Canadian authority and the War Measures

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<sup>171</sup>Except for one infantry battalion and one armored regiment held back in Calgary. (Loomis, 142)

Act. The War Measures act did create dissension in both the Quebec and Ottawa governments though.

The Red Brigades and the FLQ cases showed that good solid police work is key for targeting the terrorist organization itself. In both situations good police work built the intelligence required to eliminate the infrastructure. In Quebec, the RCMP had the added advantage of a financially troubled FLQ. Police eliminated four of the nine main FLQ cells during or resulting from FLQ fund raising activities.

This analysis demonstrated a shortfall inherent in using systems analysis. A government actor cannot guarantee that an intervention strategy will produce the desired response in the terrorist organization. Human beings make up terrorist organizations, and humans can act in incomprehensible ways at times. Authorities must maintain control and not over react even though an intervention strategy may produce the opposite response desired.

This thesis found that the first proposition might require revision. The first proposition stated: as organizations, terrorists will seek organizational survival over goal achievement. This is not necessarily true for all terrorist organizations. Tradition and blood are the roots of nationalist groups like the IRA. The goal of a free Ireland is more important than the organization itself. Nationalist terrorists who no longer want the underground life, find it easier to become reaccepted back into society. The proposition does apply to Anarchic-Ideologue groups, especially where they are not readily accepted back into society. The Abu Nidal case study revealed that Abu Nidal, the man, often used state sponsorship and internal purges to maintain his organization's integrity and health.

Abu Nidal did keep the organization's health and survival above the Palestinian cause. A terrorist organization does provide its members "primitive" societal needs. If the capability to fulfill those needs is receding, the organization must change its focus or cease to exist.

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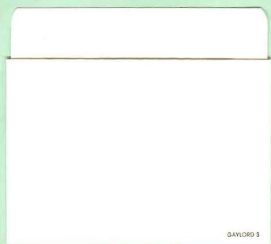
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